Human Rights Commission

2012-2013 French-Language Services Plan

Submitted March 2012

Message from the Director & CEO

I am pleased to submit the 2012-2013 French-Language Services Plan for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The Commission remains committed to fulfilling the Government's obligations pursuant to the *French-Language Services Act* and Regulations.

Members of Nova Scotia's Acadian and Francophone communities make significant contributions to the business, cultural, political and academic life of the province. These citizens work, live and play in our cities and towns. It is important that French speaking Nova Scotians can access the important protections offered by the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, so they can continue their important contributions to our province, and our country.

The past 12 months have brought about remarkable change at the Commission. A major program review resulted in dramatic improvements to dispute resolution, several new Commissioners have been appointed, and in January of 2012 I commenced a three year term as Director and CEO. Despite all of these changes, enhancing services in French remains an important objective.

New opportunities to improve services for Acadian and Francophone Nova Scotians will be sought, and efforts will continue to ensure the human rights of all citizens are protected.

David Shannon,
Director & CEO

Responses to French Requests (Written and Oral)

Inquiry/Intake Services

The Human Rights Commission responds to phone inquiries and provides information to the public on human rights issues mainly through its phone service in the Halifax office, through distribution of print material and the website. Staff are directed to provide service in French, or make available service in French, to all callers and walk-in clients who request or need service in French. Our intake team can communicate in French both orally and in writing. This unit is assisted by other staff and students from the Commission who refer clients to French speaking staff as necessary.

Written Correspondence/Print Materials/Website

All written correspondence in French received by the Commission is replied to in French.

The *Human Rights Act* is available in French. Greater emphasis is being placed on providing information through the Commission's website rather than via printed booklets and brochures. The Commission revised and re-launched the English version of its website, and a French version will be now be prepared

Investigation/Mediation

Complaint investigation is a highly technical process that requires knowledge of and the ability to describe investigation techniques, legal theory and Commission policies. The Commission is fortunate to have attracted a staff member who is able to perform investigative functions in French. One investigation has already been carried out in French, and it is anticipated that more will follow. This is a significant move forward with respect to our capacity to serve French speaking clients.

Mediation remains an important part of the Commission's work. Changes to policy allow Human Rights Officers to mediate or resolve disputes, rather than relying exclusively on a roster of external mediators. One staff member has the ability to perform this function in French as necessary.

Training/Public Events/Media

Training and public events are generally conducted in English. Promotional material for public events, such as posters and brochures, are distributed in French.

One Commissioner has French as a first language and is available to conduct public speaking engagements in French. Several senior managers have B Level French

capacity. Media releases involving Board of Inquiry decisions or other matters of relevance are distributed in French.

French Language Service Inventory

The Commission currently employs 24 people and operates provincially with three offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney and Digby. The Commission constantly strives to increase the capacity of its staff to provide services in French.

The Commission administers a roster of eight mediators who conduct mediations in different parts of the province. Currently eight Commissioners, serving on a part-time basis, come from diverse backgrounds and from different regions of the province. In addition, Board of Inquiry Panel Chairs make decisions on human rights cases.

Currently there are a number of staff who can communicate in French and competency levels vary. Two human rights officers working with Inquiry/Intake service are functionally bilingual, and two managers can also speak French.

The Commission has a number of brochures available in French. The Commission is in the process of updating all of the public information brochures and will have them available in French.

- *Human Rights Act* - Loi sur les droits de la personne
- Basic Guide to the work of the Commission - Guide de base sur le travail de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- For Employers, a guide for drafting job application forms and interview questions - Pour les employeurs, guide de rédaction des formulaires de demande d'emploi et des questions d'entrevue
- Workshops and Training through the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion Division - Ateliers et formation offerts par la Division des relations interraciales et de l'action positive de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- Plan for Dispute Resolution of Aboriginal Complaints - Plan pour l'investigation et la résolution des plaintes déposées par des Autochtones and the Executive Summary - Résumé
- Tent cards promoting the Commission

Table 1 – Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2011-2012

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2011-2012	Planned Measures – 2011-2012	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2011-2012
Objective 1 – Framework and Policy Strengthen the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act	**1.1 – Administrative and Policy Framework** The Office of Acadian Affairs and the Minister of Acadian Affairs fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.			
	1.2 – Institutional Responsibilities Designated public institutions better fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	Continue to meet responsibilities by participation in French language services coordinating committee. Submit progress report.	An effective transferring of responsibilities from outgoing CEO to manager. Participate on committee. Progress report is filed on time.	- Manager of Dispute Resolution serves as French Language Services Coordinator for the Commission. Progress report is prepared.
Objective 2 – Enabling French-language Services Consult, plan, develop, and deliver French-language services in priority areas	**2.1 – Consultations** Designated public institutions deliver services that better respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and francophone community as identified through consultation.	When changing processes/systems, consult with community as required.	Community is aware of changes within the Commission and are able to provide feedback.	Inquiry line staff are able to communicate in French. Client feedback on Commission processes and changes can be provided in French.

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2011-2012	Planned Measures – 2011-2012	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2011-2012
	2.2 – Internal Communications Public service employees are more knowledgeable about the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services. They are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and francophone community and more aware of the requirements to communicate in French; they promote services in French to the public.	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	Managers and staff receive training on the French language requirements of Government. Will liaise with Office of Acadian Affairs for an appropriate program.	This has not been achieved due to the intense planning and training activities related program changes within the Commission. This objective will be carried forward to 2012/13.
	2.3 – Communications with the Public Key stakeholders and the community better understand the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and they are more aware of the programs and services available to them.	Bilingual web site launched.	As changes occur in the commission, materials are produced in French and posted on the web site.	Commission program changes were finalized in the spring of 2012. English website changes have been made. French translation will take place within the first six months of 2012/12.

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2011-2012	Planned Measures – 2011-2012	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2011-2012
	2.4 – Service Delivery Services in French considered as priorities are identified, strategies or approaches for service delivery are implemented, and services are offered.	Ensure availability of Board of Inquiry Chairs, mediators and human rights trainers who can work in French.	Review roster mediators. Develop a list of persons who can do human rights training in French.	Dispute resolution capacity in French now exists. As well, French speaking staff are developing presentation skills in the event they are needed to provide human rights training in French.
	2.5 – Human Resources The capacity of the Public Service to provide services in French has increased.	Continue to improve capacity.	Staff continue to take courses and attend lunch and learns. Staffing of new positions takes into consideration the language of the position.	Staff education during 2011/12 focused on skill building for program changes and human rights related issues. French courses continued to be offered to staff.
Objective 3 – Community Development and Capacity-Building Support the Acadian and francophone community in its long-term development and sustainability	**3.1 – Preservation and Growth of the Community** Government has helped Acadian and francophone community organizations realize objectives expressed in the community's Comprehensive Development Plan 2009-2014.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2011-2012	Planned Measures – 2011-2012	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2011-2012
	3.2 – School Community Centres Acadian and francophone school community centres offer services and programs to the Acadian and francophone community.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 2 – Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2012-2013

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013
Objective 1 – Framework and Policy Strengthen the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act	**1.1 – Administrative and Policy Framework** The Office of Acadian Affairs and the Minister of Acadian Affairs fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.		
	1.2 – Institutional Responsibilities Designated public institutions better fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	Continue to meet responsibilities by increasing familiarity with the obligations under the Act and Regulations. Submit progress report	Commission Senior Management Team reviews the French-language Services Act and Regulations. Progress report is filed on time.
Objective 2 – Enabling French-language Services Consult, plan, develop, and deliver French-language services in priority areas	**2.1 – Consultations** Designated public institutions deliver services that better respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and francophone community as identified through consultation.	Consider the needs of Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians when planning or changing service delivery.	Community is aware of changes within the Commission and are able to provide input.

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013
	2.2 – Internal Communications Public service employees are more knowledgeable about the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services. They are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and francophone community and more aware of the requirements to communicate in French; they promote services in French to the public.	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	French speaking staff members are used as a resource by managers and staff when necessary. Managers and staff receive training on the French language service requirements of Government..
	2.3 – Communications with the Public Key stakeholders and the community better understand the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and they are more aware of the programs and services available to them.	Bilingual website launched.	Core elements of the Commission's website are available in French.

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013
	2.4 – Service Delivery Services in French considered as priorities are identified, strategies or approaches for service delivery are implemented, and services are offered.	When the next Board Chair roster is prepared, an emphasis will be placed on recruiting Chairs who can function in French. Staff with French capacity receive training to deliver all aspects of the Dispute Resolution program in French.	Qualified lawyers are identified for contact when recruitment for the Board Chair roster takes place. Dispute Resolution unit staff can mediate and investigate files in French.
	2.5 – Human Resources The capacity of the Public Service to provide services in French has increased.	Continue to improve capacity.	Staff continue to take courses and attend lunch and learns. Staffing of new positions takes into consideration the language of the position.
Objective 3 – Community Development and Capacity-Building Support the Acadian and francophone community in its long-term development and sustainability	**3.1 – Preservation and Growth of the Community** Government has helped Acadian and francophone community organizations-realize objectives expressed in the community's Comprehensive Development Plan 2009-2014.	N/A	N/A
	3.2 – School Community Centres Acadian and francophone school community centres offer services and programs to the Acadian and francophone community.	N/A	N/A